Socialist Worker

How do we move forward?

MO MOWLAM, has said that she is closely monitoring the IRA to see if their ceasefire is genuine. But there are far more who are monitoring her government's actions.

During the last ceasefire, only a small number of prisoners had their sentences reduced. If this Labour government is genuine about peace, then the hundreds of political prisoners should soon win their freedom.

Nor should Mowlam give in to Trimble's demand on de-commissioning. The IRA stock of weapons is tiny compared to the legal guns that are in the hands of pro-Unionists.

The ceasefire has created an important opening but the real issue now is how can the struggle be moved forward.

Who are our allies?

To do that we have to know who our allies are. For the last few years, the Sinn Fein leadership have argued that the real friends of the nationalist minority are the Fianna Fail government in the South and the Irish American lobby.

What they do not say is that these right wing forces have played a major role in attacking their own working class people.

Today a Sinn Fein TD is helping to prop up a Fianna Fail government in the South that is trying to cover up massive corruption.

The former Fianna Fail leader Charles Haughey got £1,000 a day in bribes for three years from Dunnes Stores. Its current Foreign Minister Ray Burke has been given £80,000 by building bosses who made huge profits from land re-zoning.

And while this corruption is going on, workers are told to put up with tiny wage rises.

Instead of supporting these thieves, republicans should be calling for their overthrow.

A different way

The best way to press forward the fight against sectarianism is through mass resistance.

Look, for example, at how the Orange Order backed down from the Ormeau Road march.

It was not the futile threats made by INLA or the diplomacy of Ray Burke that brought results: it was the guarantee that thousands were going to resist the Orange march that worked.

Over the next few months, there will be a need for more of these mobilisations to win freedom for the prisoners.

But in doing that we also need to reach out to Protestant workers who are disillusioned with Trimble and Paisley.

Opinion polls show that the majority want an accommodation with their Catholic neighbours.

They are sick of the message of hate spewed out by Unionist politicians which has found its bitter fruit in the murders of young Catholics.

The ceasefire gives a real opportunity to work together on class issues.

Catholic and Protestant workers should stick together to protest at the Labour government's decision to impose fees for colleges and to continue on the vicious Job Seekers Allowance.

We should take a lead from the Montupet workers, a mixed workforce, who stuck together until they were stabbed in the back by their union leaders.

In all of this there is a need for socialist politics, for the ideas and traditions that James Connolly stood for.

The Socialist Workers Party fights for a 32 county workers' republic. We have no truck with right wing capitalist parties like Fianna Fail.

For us the interests of workers, whether Catholic or Protestant must always come first.

If you want to see a new direction after the ceasefire, then join a fighting socialist party.

Join the Socialist Workers Party

Name _____

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